

New media technology has given rise to new spaces of communication that require new concepts of culture and art. Some artists and computer scientists are trying to visualize large-scale conversation on the net. Museums, cultural archives, and companies face the challenge of managing their data bases. This requires adapting concepts of knowledge management and semantics.

Artists and gallery curators have adopted the virtual space as a new medium for their work. Art is reaching new audiences. Innovative curatorial concepts try to take into account the special conditions of the Web, such as connectivity and participation. Exhibitions on the Web are part of a communicative process that could define new relationships between artists, curators, and the audience. New forms of culture and creativity emerge through the intersection of real and virtual spaces. In this panel, artists and curators share their projects, such as stages that mix physical presence and virtual spaces.

Gabriele Blome

netzspannung.org is a next-generation Internet platform that extends the abilities of the art and technology communities, and offers a variety of services and media channels such as infospace, dataspace, and workspace. netzspannung.org members no longer rely on rigid structures of given network architecture, protocols, and data formats. Rather, they are free to set up distributed community engines tailored to their specific needs. Platform architecture supports easy flexibility from the database level to the user interface and enables user-defined forms of interaction. The member-defined modules are spread over the community network or stored on a member's machine, which is seamlessly integrated and becomes a virtual part of netzspannung.org. The distributed community engine enables networked artistic production and offers spaces for presentation, communication, and information within a dynamic context. netzspannung.org was founded by Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss at MARS Exploratory Media Lab, Institute for Media Communication

Gabriele Blome was assistant curator at Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, from 1997 to 1999. In 2000, she joined the Exploratory Media Lab, Institute for Media Communication, of the GMD German National Research Center for Information Technology, where she is curator for netzspannung.org.

Steve Dietz

Even for online or virtual display, strategies acknowledging the convergence of Internet and physical space must be developed. How can the position of artists, audience, and museums be defined in such hybrid media spaces? What are the new formats and strategies of curatorial work and cultural mediation in networked environments?

Steve Dietz is the founding director of new media initiatives at the Walker Art Center, where he is responsible for information systems as well curating and programming the online Gallery 9. He co-initiated the award-winning ArtsConnectEd collaboration

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PERTTU RASTAS
Kiasma Museum of
Contemporary Art

WARREN SACK
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with The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and initiated one of the earliest archive collections of net art: the Walker's Digital Arts Study Collection, including äda'web, Bowling Alley, and DissemiNET.

He has organized and curated new media exhibitions, including Beyond Interface: net art and Art on the Net (1988), Shock of the View: Artists, Audiences, and Museums in the Digital Age (1999), Digital Documentary: The Need to Know and the Urge to Show (1999), Cybermuseology for the Museo de Monterrey (1999), Art Entertainment Network (2000), Outsourcing Control? The Audience As Artist, Open Source Lounge, and the Bureau of Inverse Technology's BangBang for Medi@terra 2000. Telematic Connections: The Virtual Embrace in February 2001.

Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss

Mixed reality means constructing a space by interlinking different layers of reality into a new spatial frequency. Generating this space means staging an experimental field for performative perceptions. The metaphor we use is that of a room filled with data, a space that is performed by networked bodies. The Mixed Reality Stage is an instrument for the human body and vice versa.

Mixed reality requires interfaces to the senses, enabling people to communicate via perceptual channels: hearing, seeing, touching, moving, thinking. It is inhabited by two types of presence: the performers' physical bodies in actual space and virtual bodies in space/time representations. This is illustrated by several examples realized at MARS Exploratory Media Lab: Carry On, i2TV, and Murmuring Fields. In Murmuring Fields, the camera vision system draws traces of human movement in virtual space. Two performers develop a choreographic sequence in a space filled with a virtual sound field: an interactive radio play on stage.

The technical architecture is based on a VRML plugin, the eMUSE (electronic Multi-User Stage Environment) system. eMUSE is a theater machine, a multi-user system combined with a camera-tracking system. The eMUSE plugin is available at the netzspannung.org. Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss are research artists who studied visual arts, theater,

architecture, computer graphics, and visual communication. Since 1992, they have been artistic directors of the Institute for Media Communication, and since 1997, they have directed Media Art and Research Studies (MARS) at GMD, the German National Research Center for Information Technology in Sankt Augusti, Germany.

Their work has been exhibited at the Centre Pompidou and the Museum for Design, and presented at the Museum of Modern Art and conferences such as SIGGRAPH, Imagina, Art Futura, ISEA, and Ars Electronica. In 1992, their Home of the Brain received the Golden Nica for interactive art at Ars Electronica.

Charlotte Pöchhacker

The ongoing growth of a media/digital culture and the increasingly sophisticated possibilities of the Internet present challenging possibilities for new thought on design and new forms of expression in cultural communication and cultural practice. These new conditions for curating, viewing, and experiencing online content require a profound reconsideration of interdisciplinary collaboration, of the relation of curator, artist, and audience, and of future modes of producing and exhibiting art.

Against this background, artimage's Tactical Systems for a New Cultural Practice explores visual, navigational, and technological innovations, and their potential for changing and expanding esthetic experience. The project is a testing ground for concepts that use the discursive and visual space of the Web to flatten distinctions between artist and curator and curator and audiences. Based on the notion that form affects content and comprehension, special attention is devoted to challenging Web design as a new cultural technique. Another important aspect of the project is testing and designing interactive spaces to address and reach different publics (interfaces that allow for individual access and multiple viewpoints: polyperspectivity).

Charlotte Pöchhacker is founding director of artimage and artistic director of the Graz Biennial Media + Architecture (Austria). She has edited several books and catalogues on the interdependency of media, architecture, and society, and conducted extensive curatorial work in the fields of new media art and architecture.

Perttu Rastas

I want to challenge the notion of virtual space vs. digital space based on my daily work at a new museum, where we have learned that keeping up and running this so called virtual world requires very special and very expensive hardware structure and software knowledge management. Secondly, I want to underline how important it is for artists that we have still non-commercial media institutions like museums. Media artists are the most important group and community who can give democratic and humanistic simulation (as a model of possible futures) for the IT-based industrial world. Thirdly, I want to show possibilities for cooperative programs that involve culture institutions and corporations, using the cooperation between Kiasma and Nokia as a sponsorship model.

Perttu Rastas is senior media art curator of Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art. He is responsible for Kiasma's information systems and media art collections. He shares responsibility for media art performances and exhibitions and is involved in planning Kiasma's theatrical programming in film and video. He has also worked for KSL's media workshop (1985-1989) as a production editor and as director of operations for the Finnish Media Art Archives, AV-arkki (1989-1994). He has been responsible for planning and coordination of MuuMedia (International Media Art Festival, 1988-1995) and has worked as media art consultant for AVEK (Finnish Audiovisual Support Center).

Warren Sack

With networked computers, we can begin to imagine the advent of a truly global conversation and meaningful communications among thousands, millions, perhaps even billions of people. But what do these new public spaces look like, and how do they support many-to-many communication? How can we begin to concretely envision these new kinds of connections that link people and media together? I am interested in online public space and public discourse. To better understand and participate in these emergent spaces, I design software to summarize, visualize, and navigate what I call very-large-scale conversations (VLSCs) like those conducted on Usenet and large mailing lists or bulletin boards. In this panel, I demo my Conversation Map system, which can graphically summarize the large volumes of email that constitute most contemporary VLSCs. It is my hope that Conversation Map is a first step toward a set of tools that will provide the means to navigate the social and linguistic connections engendered by the new media spaces of the Internet.

Warren Sack is a software designer and media theorist. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley in the fall of 2000, he was a research scientist at the MIT Media Laboratory and a member of the Interrogative Design Group at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. His research interests include computer-mediated communication, online communities, architecture and design for online spaces, social networks, computational linguistics, and media studies. He designs software for navigation, summarization, and visualization of online, public space, and public discourse.